

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS
JANUARY 27, 2026

Agenda: 8:30 – Bills
8:45 –
9:00 – Chris McElgunn, Klenda Austerman, Atty – Tax Sale
9:15 –
9:30 – Tony Martin - Updates
10:00 –

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session with all members present. County Attorney Paul Kitzke, and County Clerk Amy Jo Tharp were also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Shannon moved to approve minutes from the last meeting. Joe seconded. Motion carried. Joe moved to approve the county vouchers. Shannon seconded. Motion carried. The County Clerk was instructed to draw warrants on the Treasurer chargeable to the various funds of the county for the following amounts:

General	\$	217,229.86
Fair Funds	\$	37,000.00
Judicial District	\$	646.68
Road & Bridge	\$	40,849.72
Airport	\$	2,253.99
Services for Elderly	\$	103,897.50
Hospital Mntnc Fund	\$	450,000.00
Alcoholic Treatment	\$	2,700.00
Ambulance Bequest	\$	8,050.00
Noxious Weed	\$	4,713.25
EMS	\$	19,686.16
Fire	\$	18,330.64
Community Health	\$	16,432.55
Library	\$	86,563.00
911 Wireless	\$	117.15
Treas Tech Fund	\$	479.50
Library Emp Benefits	\$	32,700.00
Emp Misc W/H	\$	3,600.00
Sheriff	\$	42,213.67
TOTAL:	\$	1,087,463.67

Sheldon Shuck, Rodney Kelling, and Tony Martin were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting.

Sheldon expressed his thanks to the commissioners for keeping him employed through the health issues he is currently battling.

Rex Evans checked in and wanted to find out if anyone had reached out to Nate Wolters to see if the transfer station will still be taken down by March 1. Tron reached out to Nate and said they will be working on the transfer station within the next week or two.

Rodney asked the commissioners if they had time to discuss the raise he had asked for. Tron replied that with Joe running late, they would make the decision once Joe arrived and would let Rodney know.

Walter Beesley attended the meeting in person and Warren Willis via phone to listen to Chris McElgunn.

Chris McElgunn with Klenda Austerman, Attorneys at Law, was on conference call to discuss the issues with the latest tax sale over mineral rights. Chris explained the mineral interests are usually unknown and hard to locate in the deeds office. He described several issues with holding a tax sale on minerals and the causes it brings. He also expressed that these tax sales are a "Buyer Beware" status. The title company hired to do the title work only did work for what they were paid, and it was understood there was a lack of communication somewhere to get complete title work to fix all the issues with this tax sale and compensation for the extra work it would take. The commissioners agreed the goal is to clean up the sales and get them corrected. Chris mentioned deeds or tracts that state et al is difficult to conduct a reasonable search of which seems to be the issue with some of the mineral rights which were up for sale.

Tron made a motion for a twenty (20) minute executive session with the commissioners, county attorney and Chris McElgunn regarding attorney, client privilege to go over some issues pertaining to the tax sale. Joe seconded. The executive session began at 9:22 AM and concluded at 9:42 AM. No action taken.

Shannon made a motion for a twenty (20) minute executive session with the commissioners, county attorney and Chris McElgunn regarding attorney, client privilege to go over some issues pertaining to the tax sale. Joe seconded. The executive session began at 9:43 AM and concluded at 10:02 AM. No action taken.

Walter Beesley stated the issue he was aware of was that some people owning these mineral rights were not notified of the tax sale and asked what happens now since they were not properly notified. Chris replied that the county will have to pay back to the buyer the purchase amount plus interest. This will reset the tax sale if the taxes are not paid by the correct owners.

Thea Schnittker, Angela Eichman, Jayme Rich, and Lynne Webb were in attendance.

Joe asked Angela how and why the recorded mineral interest would no longer match the taxed royalty interest provided by the oil and gas companies. Thea spoke up and said the oil and gas companies only require documents showing change of ownership such as affidavits of heirship, but do not require actual deeds to be recorded in the register of deeds office as royalty interests are personal property and mineral interests are considered real property. This often happens because a court or a lawyer would need to be involved by the owner to have the real property interests

legally changed. Using affidavits of heirship for the personal property change is done by the owners as it is more economical and can be completed by the person and then sent to the oil and gas companies who then provide the paid outs to the appraiser for taxing. This causes the actual discrepancies and makes it difficult to identify the owners of the royalties and minerals.

Angela asked the commissioners if they had received her email about Seaboard Energy's estimated idea of valuation. She asked if the commissioners wanted to use Seaboard's valuation or the counties valuation. Tron asked what would happen if the commissioners agreed to Seaboard's valuation. Angela stated it will usually go to a hearing and be locked in for a year then can change every year. Tron asked Angela to investigate it and get some figures for them.

Amy presented the commissioners with a quote for a new computer at the landfill stating the computer currently out there is old and outdated. She said Tony had requested information on a new computer for the office. The commissioners approved a new computer for the landfill totaling \$1,737.75 which included a five (5) year warranty on repair and a three (3) year warranty for on-site maintenance and repair. Tony expressed the road and bridge department will need new computers too as they are at least six (6) years old or older.

Tony informed the commissioners the house which was supposed to be built some time ago finally has quite a bit of progress done on it and expressed that when it is completed the mobile home will have to leave the county or go to the landfill.

Jayne Rich stated all CDs are coming up on their due date and presented the commissioners with quotes from Dream First Bank and Citizens State Bank. She asked the commissioners if they would rather have a five (5) year CD as it is the best rate and at this time does not foresee the county needing to touch those funds. Dream First Bank quoted 3.90 for a five (5) year CD and Citizens State Bank quoted 3.81. The commissioners asked Jayme to contact Citizens State Bank and see if they will match Dream First Bank and if not to do a three (3) year term.

Thea let the commissioners know the new county website will go live on January 29th around noon. Thea presented information on a book scanner with OCR capabilities, and other software the county will need to start scanning in old books and getting everything searchable as well as permanent records saved to help free up space in the courthouse. She said the register of deeds tech fund will cover the costs of the scanner.

Salina Blue	\$22,445.00
Scantastik	\$26,990.00
Large Document Solutions, LLC	\$26,990.00

Joe made a motion to bypass the bidding process since the scanner is a specialty item and accepts the quote from Salina Blue in the amount of \$22,445.00. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Jeff Cox was in appearance with Tony Martin.

Shannon requested a fifteen (15) minute executive session over non-elected personnel members to discuss new duties and wages. Tron seconded the motion. Executive session began at 11:39 AM and concluded at 11:53 AM. No action taken.

Shannon made a motion to move Jeff Cox from his current position at road and bridge to public works administrative assistant beginning February 1st, 2026, through June 15th, 2026, and on June 16th Jeff will transition into public works supervisor. Tron seconded and Joe abstained. Motion carried.

The commissioners discussed Jeff's new wage and decided on \$80,000.00 per year beginning February 1st, 2026.

Tony said he and Jeff will attend the Kansas Highway conference in May and Jeff will keep up on the weed licensing as well.

Jayne came back down to the commissioner meeting and stated Citizens State Bank will match Dream First Bank on the five (5) year interest rate. Jayme also informed the commissioners she has not received state tax withholding from the wellness center since February of 2025 and has not seen any funds come out of the county account that she had not been able to reconcile. Shannon asked to have Shelby come in. Jayme said during this previous tax sale there has been no communication with the title company stating they needed more funds to do a more in-depth search of records or anything to have issues of getting complete title work, so Jayme would like to use a different title company for future tax sales.

Shelby was in attendance and Tron asked about the state sales tax. Shelby stated she spoke with someone at the state, and they claimed the sales tax was reported but did not understand why there was no money coming in and it was determined the wrong account was being used which was closed and no money going to the state. The state told Shelby they would dismiss the penalties and send a letter of verification claiming so. The commissioners told Shelby to go up to Jayme's office and show Jayme what is happening on the state website so the issue can be resolved and to get paperwork turned in today.

Amy revisited the COLAs which were approved at the previous meeting to clarify whether the commissioners were taking the COLA or not. The commissioners declined receiving the COLA.

Joe made a motion to give Rodney a merit raise of \$1,500.00 and allow Rodney to continue being paid for the runs he attends. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Shannon made a motion to approve the COLA for those employees who are capped on the county pay scale. Tron seconded. Motion carried.

Abated Orders were reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer for tax year 2025 numbers 16 and 17 with a total valuation removed of 3,911 and tax assessed with a decrease of -\$793.52.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman